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Visual Storytelling

DFP-331

Movie: A Quiet Place

The 2018 film A Quiet Place is directed by John Krasinski and shot with minimal use of dialogue, it focuses on tension and visual storytelling. In this post-apocalyptic world, sound-sensitive creatures hunt humans, and a family attempts to survive. The characters' nonverbal cues convey the lack of dialogue, so every movement and object are essential for telling the story. This will therefore focus on how A Quiet Place uses objects, motion, cinematography, and production design to replace the invisibility of sound with symbolism.

Things as Narrators  
 In A Quiet Place, in turn, objects replace dialogues to reflect very important aspects of the inner-world of the characters. For instance, it is the sand paths the family makes that show their knowledge of the dangers presented by noise and which thus bolster and increase their need for silence and discipline. Warning red lights outside this family's home signal danger, while the usually silent farm turns out to be a fortress. Regan's hearing aid represents her vulnerability in a world which is dependent on sound and later for survival. In my short film, objects would represent practical and emotional value. A compass, for instance, might say everything about direction and emotional turmoil in a character's head and reveal the whole story without saying a word.  
  
Motion as Expression  
 The body languages and motions in A Quiet Place are pivotal in allowing the actors to express their intense feelings without uttering a word. The gestures of Evelyn and Lee touching each other show the extent of care and love. Many of these non-verbal intimacies are shown with frantic gestures in threat, expressing panic or terror. Evelyn gives birth in silence, lest her voice raise into cries and call some of the creatures. Shaking hands and pained expressions show that she is both terrified and resolute; much of the tale is conveyed through motion. In my short movie, movement speaks to stakes. A character cautious in the jungle can show he's being careful, and erratic actions can also spell fear. All these elements bring the viewer in, even without words.

Camera: Silent Framing  
 Cinematography in A Quiet Place is supposed to help with the storytelling and emphasize themes of loneliness, tension, and how fragile the family is. The wide shots of the family against landscapes show them small and helpless, while close-ups highlight the emotional turmoil they're going through. Where the camera follows Regan, the movie goes entirely silent-deaf, as she is. That silence forces emphasis on the visual, it makes the viewer "listen" with the eyes, relating to her unique reality in a world that majors on sound. Applying strategic use of cinematography to my project could enhance immersion. Silence with powerful imagery would play with the viewers' sense of time, space, and tension, engaging them more with the story.  
  
Production Design: A Muted World  
 In A Quiet Place, it is production design that supports the theme of silence. The homestead of the family does not send out any sound in whatever way possible: soft surfaces, walking on sand, activities that finally give detail about their resourcefulness, and fear of sound. The use of sign language among family members also impresses to the degree of plot and characterization. The silent communication spoke to a closeness, an aptness within their dangerous world. On my short film, production design sets the setting and emotional stakes. In a survivor kind of story, the environment reflected the physical and emotional burdens resting on characters' shoulders; thus, even minor design elements could be given meaning.  
  
Symbolic Imagery: Redefining Quiet  
 Symbolism in A Quiet Place enriches the story; therefore, the hypersensitive ears of the creatures are a symbol of constant danger, which resides in the aspect of sound, which usually happens to be a mode of information transfer. One of the key symbols within this film is that of color. The example in the case of Evelyn, changing the color of the house lights from white to red during birth, is an indicator of danger and heightens tension. In instances, red represents life, birth, and death, which is the danger, paralleled by survival and vulnerability. Using symbolic imagery in my short film could be a deeper meaning of the story. With a recurring motif, like colors or natural elements, it could symbolize the character's emotional journey or represent the broader theme of the film.

Works Cited

Krasinski, John, director. *A Quiet Place*. Platinum Dunes, 2018.